









IN "THE PASTURES OF PERIL"

THE BLACK DIAMOND AND HIS LOYAL SIDEKICK BUMPER WERE HEADING FOR TYLER VALLEY, WHERE NOTHING MORE EXCITING THAN
A BARBECUE USUALLY OCCURED! THIS TIME SOMETHING MORE
EVIL WAS COOKING! A WITCHES' BREW OF INJUSTICE AND
MURDER STIRRED BY TRIGGER-HAPPY HANDS! DEATH WAS BEING
DISHED OUT WHOLESALE TO TYLER VALLEY... AS THE BLACK
DIAMOND SOON LEARNED FOR HIMSELF!

WHYZ

GET 'EM UP, YOU TWO! DROP YOUR GUN BELTS! DROP 'EM, I SAID! BECAUSE WE'LL BLAST YOU TO KINGDOM COME IF YOU DON'T! THAT'S WHY!

THIS IS PRIVATE
PROPERTY! YOU'RE TRESPASSIN' AGIN' THE LAW!
WE CAN SHOOT YOU
IF WE WANT!

I'M SURE YOU WILL! I'VE SEEN YOUR PRETTY FACES ON WANTED POSTERS IN SONORA! WHAT'S ONE MURDER MORE, EH? YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU SAID THAT! SHOOT YEM, ED!









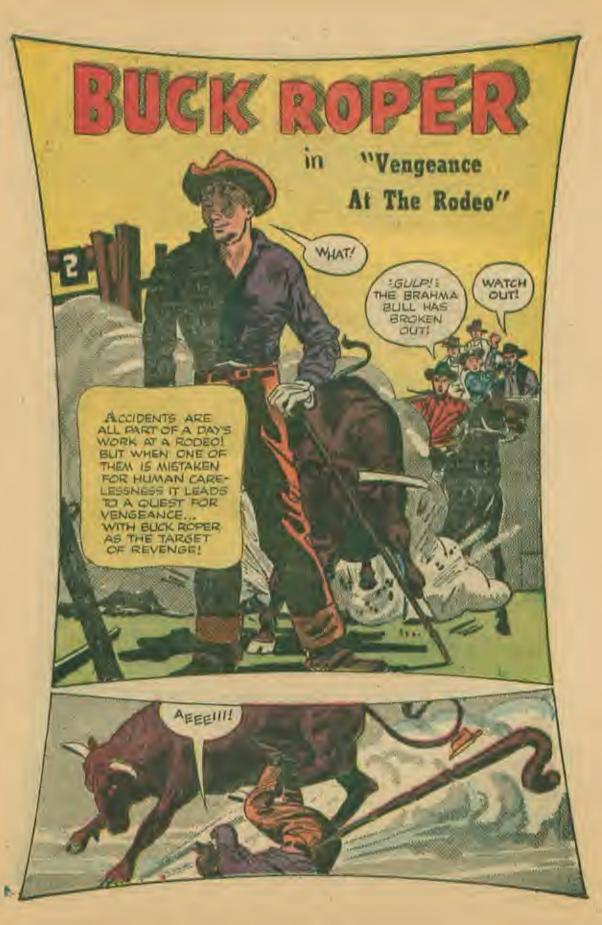




























DRESSED TO KILL

Andy looked across the counter of the diner at his father who was wiping the cups and saucers very carefully, and then at Gramps who sat at one of the tables with a cup of hot coffee in his hand. It seemed to Andy that at long as he could remember, Gramps had been sitting there with the cup of coffee in his hand. Gramps and Pops used to go gold prospecting in the old days — before Pops broke his leg. That broken leg had taken Pops out of circulation, and he had to open the diner on the highway.

The kids at school kept telling Andy how their fathers were cow punchers, carried their guns low, and were always on the verge of one adventure or another. They were either after rustlers, outlaws, or just rounding up cattle — but it was exciting. More exciting than washing dishes.

"Pops looked up from the soapy sink, "What's the matter Andy?" he asked.

"I been thinkin", Pops." Andy looked squarely into the center of a dirty dish on his tray, "Couldn't we sell this diner and get a job on a ranch?"

"Why, soul" exploded Gramps, "You know Pops couldn't ride a horse with his bad leg. No ranch would hire him!"

"I don't mean ropin' and ridin', I mean workin' in the kitchen," Andy ended weakly.

"There's no money in that," Pops said softly, "We got a nice steady business here, son, Some day you'll appreciate it. What's enting at you, anyway, Andy?"

"Nothin" "

"C'mon, Andy, somethin's on your mind," his father said softly. "I thought we were pals."

"You know Pete Harris," Andy said slowly.

"He's one of the boys in your class, isn't he?"

"Yeah, His father was made foremen of the Double Y ranch yesterday."

"Blast it!" shouted Gramps. "We can't all he heroes! There was the time at Bull Noose Creek when your father and me was ambushed by a bunch o' howlin' critters 'd make your hair curl..." Gramps pulled open the small drawer beneath the cash register and pulled out a pistol, showing the butt under Andy's nose. "See them notches, sonny," he shouted, "they didn't come from pussyfooting..."

"All right, Gramps," Pops said softly, "Andy isn't interested in yesterday . . . he's worried about tomorrow. Do you think, Andy, the boys might sit up and take notice if you went to school on a pony instead of a bicycle?"

Andy's eyes shone. "Do you mean that, Pops?"

"Where'll you get the money?" snorted Gramps. "You been savin' for two years to get a car, and you're only ready to look for a bargain now!"

"Ljust decided a car gets too many flat tires," grinned Pops, "and you got to walk too far to get gas and oil. Now you take a horse, you got no problems at all!"

Andy screamed Yipeee only once and dashed into the kitchen with the dishes dancing on his tray.

"Put that gun back, Gramps, afore you hurt yourself." Pops said.

"All right. All I ask is that you get Andy a horse with a rumble seat. I'm gettin' too tired to walk."

.........

It was almost closing time for the diner. The dishes and glassware were washed and stacked. The microred interiors had been scrubbed down by an ambitious Andy until they sparkled with a brightness that rivalled the lights. Andy sat in a corner finishing up his homework, and Pops was counting out the cash so he could bank it in the morning, when the sound of a big car pulled up to a stop outside.

A little man came in, a dude, Andy noticed as he closed his school books. The man stopped for a moment at his reflection in the wall mirror, straightened a tie that needed no straightening, and smoothed back his slick black hair that already was plastered to his head. He sat down at one of the tables near the wall and faced the mirror. Andy handed him a menu, but he didn't look at it.

"A steak and french fries, kid. I like my steak rare. Hop to it!"

The dude was wearing swell clothes, Andy admitted mentally. Never saw anything like it in the catalog. Even while the dude ate he would look at his suit, and maybe straighten the points in his pocket handkerchief, or tuck at his shirt collar so that the points would be even.

He finished the steak, and downed the coffee, and Andy scribbled a check for the meal. The dude didn't look at it. He got up, and looked into the mitror, buttoning his jacket. Satisfied at his reflection he walked over to Pops at the register, put his hand in the pocket of his jacket and said. "This is a stick up. Empty the register like a good boy, and put the money on the counter. If you do what I say nobody'll get hurt."

Gramps spit out his coffee all over a fresh tablecloth and Pops just stood there.

"C'mon," the dude jerked at his pocket angrily, "I ain't got all day." The outline of

gun stood out large and clear as it pressed against the smooth cloth-

Pops wheeled awkwardly on his twisted leg, opened a drawer, and a six-shooter roared almost as fast as it saw the light. The dude dropped to the floor, and the suit became a dark red near the shoulder. His hand came slowly out of his pocket, and lifeless fingers dropped an automatic to the floor.

"Get the sheriff, Andy," Pops said. "We got a customer here who won't pay for his steak and potatoes!"

"Golly!" gasped Andy, ashe ran out. "Wait till I tell the guys tomorrow!"

Pops mopped up the last remains of the blood on the floor, and Grampa sipped at his last cup of coffee.

"You shouldn't of taken the chance," Gramps said, over and over again. "I know the horse was important to the kid, but not for you to risk your neck over it. Why, one squeeze of the trigger, and you'd be full of lead now!"

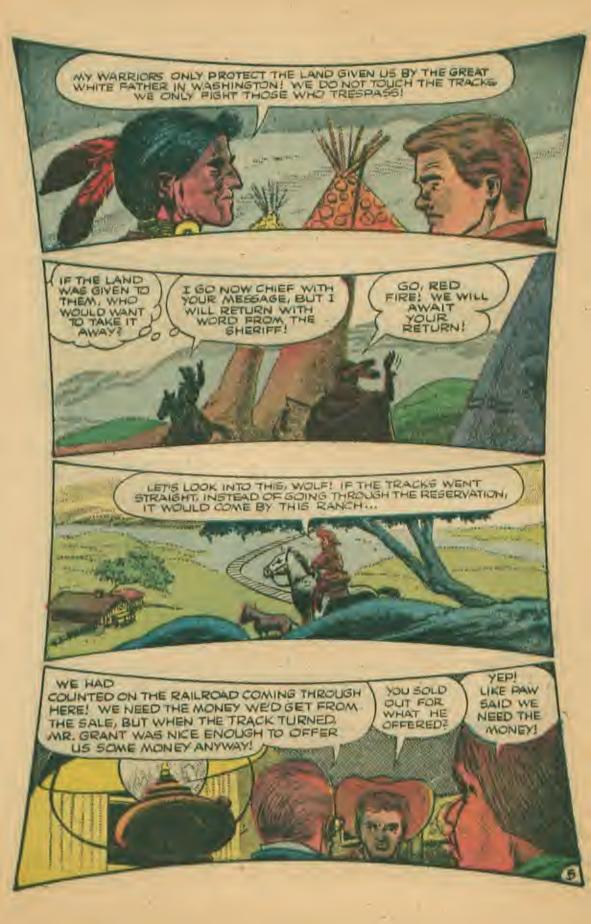
Pops wrung the mop out and picked up the pail, "It wasn't as serious as that," Pops smiled. "I knew he wouldn't pull the trigger. He didn't look like the kind of guy who'd put a hole in a nice new suit!"



















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